

GREENSBORO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

# TRAFFIC ZONE news mag

WINTER 2007

## *Greensboro Welcomes the Arrival of* **Luke** *Pay-by-Space* *Parking*

HEAT ROCKS THE BELLS  
FOR CHARITY

SANTA TRAIN COMES TO TOWN

A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR  
JIM WESTMORELAND

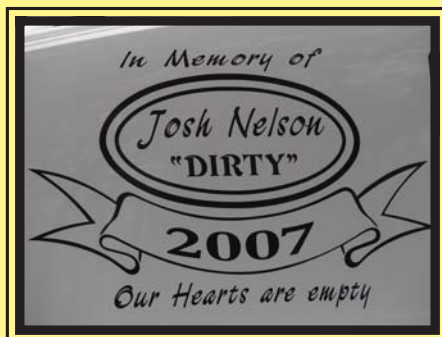


VOLUME 31 WINTER 2007

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*This issue of the Traffic Zone is dedicated to the memory of Larry "Josh" Nelson.*



## TRAFFIC ZONE EMPLOYEE NEWSMAGAZINE

The Traffic Zone employee news-magazine is the department's printed resource source for employee information and communication. The document is published twice a year by Public Transportation Division Marketing and Communications and is made available on the department website at [www.greensboro-nc.gov/gdot](http://www.greensboro-nc.gov/gdot). For comments or suggestions, please send emails to:

[gdotquality@greensboro-nc.gov](mailto:gdotquality@greensboro-nc.gov)

### Director

Jim Westmoreland, P.E.

### Public Transportation Manager

Libby James

### Strategic Information Specialist

Kevin Elwood



### Greensboro

### Department of Transportation *Mission Statement*

We are committed to improving safety and mobility and providing quality services to our community by:

Being Customer-focused  
and Team Oriented

Being Cost-effective  
and Innovative

Developing, Empowering  
and Recognizing our Employees

# A Message From the Director



## Celebrating Our Successes – Preparing for a Great 2008!

It's hard to believe another year is almost complete. It seems like just yesterday, I was thinking about our plans for 2007 and along with our Leadership Team, we were discussing and developing a strategy to make it all happen.

When I look back on our many accomplishments in 2007, all I can do is say thank you and great job GDOT! Not only did we meet all of our goals, in most all cases, we exceeded them and raised our bar to a new level.

Just a few examples of our successes in 2007 include: completion and City Council adoption of our newly revised City Street Design Standards, progressive implementation of our statewide award winning MPO Bi-Ped plan, continuing progress on and implementation of City Council adopted Parking Recommendations (including the establishment of a permanent Parking Committee, implementation of parking pay stations, and continued improvements in our parking decks and lots.)

Implementation of 30-minute bus service for GTA and the continued success of our national award winning HEAT service, completion of Phase III Depot improvements, our amazement at the sheer volume of new service and operational requests handled by our Signs/Markings and Signals maintenance personnel, continued appreciation for our outstanding administrative support team, and last but certainly not least, continued success of our Quality Program and our efforts to make Quality our 5th Core Value.

So how do we top that and more specifically, what's in store for us in 2008? As a wise man once told me (my Father), "life is a journey, not a sprint; so live it one day at a time and always remember to take care of yourself (you can't help others if you're not healthy – so exercise, eat right, and get your needed rest), think before you act (let your values, training, and experiences guide your decisions and actions), and follow your dreams with passion (do what you love and chase those things

which truly fill your soul with warmth, excitement, and goodness.)".

As we look forward to 2008, there are many, many things that will occupy our time and attention. A few of core work items include: continuing to be highly responsive and professional in providing Quality transportation services to our community, adjusting to the specific needs and direction of our new City Council, working through another tight budget year and continuing to use all of our resources wisely and efficiently, working with our new City Council and our community to develop a Transportation Action Plan for Greensboro (to validate/prioritize our many transportation needs and to develop a specific plan of action to address them going forward), and advancement and implementation of several on-going and important operational and capital projects.

Other items include: participating in and helping our City celebrate its Bicentennial (200th birthday), continuing to enhance and improve our Quality Program, supporting the development of numerous community and economic development projects (which will all add value to Greensboro's jobs base and overall quality of life), celebrating our success in achieving Gold level status (or higher) for the seventh straight year through our GDOT City/County United Way Campaign, and most important, continuing to help, support, and love each other as we navigate life's and work's many complex challenges.

Thank you for another great year GDOT! You are absolutely the best in the business and I am so very proud and blessed to have the opportunity to work and serve with each of you. In closing remember, "life is a journey, not a sprint." So, take some time over the holidays to celebrate our successes, recharge your personal battery, and come back ready to make 2008 your (and our) best year yet!

*Jim Westmoreland, PE*



# New Pay-by-Space Parking Saves Time and Coins

**T**he City of Greensboro Department of Transportation Parking Division is always looking for opportunities to make parking in the downtown area even more convenient and efficient for visitors who take in the sights and sounds of a growing area commercial and residential area. Beginning January 2, the division will implement the latest in parking technology...the automated pay station. Located in the Elm/Greene and Elm/McGee parking lots, the new station will replace the traditional high-maintenance meters and make parking even more consumer friendly.

There are actually three pay stations which offer the new Pay-by-Space system for using the parking facilities. Nicknamed Luke by the manufacturer (if you have ever seen the movie *Cool Hand Luke*, you'll understand the company's humorous label), the machines' futuristic appearance may make you think that it is more suitable for parking Jetsons-type flying cars. Instead, the easy to use system will make parking your down-to-earth vehicle easier than the proverbial falling off of a bicycle.

To use the system, simply park your vehicle in any unoccupied, unreserved space in the lot. Each individual space has its respective number displayed on the ground. Upon securing your vehicle and making a mental note of the space number, visit the pay station to pay for your parking.

To activate the meter, press "OK" on the number dial and the LCD screen will display the simple directions. Enter the space

number and choose the amount of time you plan to stay up to two hours. Then just insert your payment and you are done!

"This is really an easy system to use, and will make life easier for our parkers," says **Robin Davenport**, Parking Section Manager. "Each person will have to make only one trip to the pay station, and from there, they can move on and enjoy their time downtown." The pay station is also a time-saver for patrons without change, who in the past had to obtain change from the local change machine or merchant and then walk back to the meter to insert the coins. Although some new pay systems still require the individual to return to their vehicle to place a printed receipt on the dashboard as proof of payment, the Park-by-Space system chosen by Greensboro eliminates the second trip by retaining the parking validation in the system itself.

The most exciting feature of the pay station is its new flexible payment option. The unit, like its forerunner, will continue to accept coins. Nickels, dimes, quarters and dollar coins are acceptable forms of payment, so visitors can continue to raid their loose change jars before coming downtown. In addition, \$1 dollar bills can be used for payment. Please note that the machine does not offer change, so what you insert in the machine stays in the machine. However, if you are short on cash, there's no need to worry. The pay station also accepts major credit cards. You can charge

*Continued on page 5*



your parking fee to your Visa, MasterCard, American Express or Discover Network credit card.

Another important feature of the pay station is the full-color bi-lingual display. The unit is able to display information in English and Spanish to accommodate the growing Spanish-speaking population. The screen also can be programmed to display advertising and special notices.

Of course, just as important as parking ease and convenience is parking enforcement. When City of Greensboro Parking Enforcement Officers are able to effectively enforce parking, users greatly benefit. "This will make their jobs much easier" says Robin. "They are literally able to capture a snapshot of valid parkers in the lot on their desktop computer and can see if the spaces are expired. Even if the officer is on site at the lot, a simple administrative code entered into the machine will print out a list of spaces that should be occupied and those that have expired. This will help keep parkers rotating in and out effectively."

Again, the pay station is very user friendly and should present few, if any, challenges to persons using for the first time. To ensure that visitors are able to make the transition seamlessly, parking representatives will be available during the first few days of operation. In addition, printed instruction cards will be distributed on the windshields of vehicles in the days leading up to the January launch. If there are any problems regarding the use of the meters, customers are asked to call 373-2156. The new Pay-by-Space system, however, is painless and is expected to offer immediate benefits for everyone. You could one day see more pay stations in a parking lot or on a street near you.

See a Back to Basics repair item?  
Call the B2B **Hotline...**

373-2417



## Administrative Section

### Planned Leave Without Pay (PLWOP)

The City offers a PLWOP program that allows employees to purchase additional paid leave hours through payroll deduction. Your request must be submitted on the appropriate form that can be printed from the Human Resources home page on the Intranet. You must complete the top portion with your personal information, place your initials beside each "employee acknowledgement," sign your name and have your supervisor approve prior to approval from the GDOT director. Your request must be received by Kay Scott in Human Resources no later than 5:00 PM on Monday, December 31, 2007 – No Exceptions. If you are interested and need assistance, please contact LaToya Lancaster at 373-4511.

The first payment will be deducted during the January 15, 2008 payroll. If you submit a request and a deduction is not on your January 15, 2008 check stub, please call Kay Scott at 373-2467 immediately. Corrections will not be made if you contact her after the January 31, 2008 payroll cut-off which is January 22 at 12 noon.

The maximum hours you are allowed to purchase are printed on the request form and are determined by your annual leave earning rate. The cost of the PLWOP is deducted from your pay check in 24 equal payments on a pre-tax basis. To calculate the per pay period cost, divide the annual salary (as of 12/31/07) by 2080 hours = hourly rate of pay; multiply the hourly rate of pay by the number of hours being purchased = total cost; and divide the total cost by 24 pay periods = per pay period deduction.

### Dee = Administrative Support = Quality!

**Deidre (Dee) Brown-Mitchell** joined the Admin team on July 2nd and we're so glad! In such a short time she has added a much needed level of administrative experience for the department. She is also a friendly customer service representative who treats the caller or visitor as a top priority and they know it.



"Quality" is a very familiar word to Dee. She knows the meaning of quality and exemplifies it in all of her work. The task is not finished until she is satisfied that it is her best work.

Handling administrative duties and accounting functions is second nature to Dee. She has acquired a lot of experience throughout her working career and looks for opportunities to demonstrate her abilities. She is very proficient using Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Access, and Publisher.

She also has a strong work ethic and enjoys a challenging assignment whereas she can continue to learn new skills.

Please feel free to ask for Dee's help with any of your existing or upcoming projects.

### Changes in City Personnel Policies

Recently, The City of Greensboro Human Resources Department posted new changes to the City's personnel policies. To help break down some of the new changes, a frequently asked questions (FAQ) list has been developed. To view the new policies and the FAQ's, visit <http://citynet/personnelpolicychanges.shtml>.



## Meet Your “Benefits Assistant”...

By now almost everyone has had an opportunity to meet **LaToya Lancaster**, GDOT’s Department Records Coordinator a/k/a “Benefits Assistant.” If not, please take a moment to introduce yourself to her. She would like to get to know who her customers are, and you’ll want to know who to contact should you need assistance regarding the 2008 benefits.



LaToya is very experienced in the Human Resource field, which includes complying with state and federal regulations. She has also established a good resource network in the City’s HR department so that she can acquire complete and accurate information when needed.

Being organized is a key to success, especially if you are processing payroll or merits. LaToya definitely has strong organizational skills. She has tackled reorganizing some of the HR files and has created some new filing systems that will allow faster retrieval of information. This includes work that is pending and work that has already been processed.

Feel free to contact LaToya at 373-4511 with any questions regarding benefits or the time management system.

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## Technology Section

The Technology Section of GDOT has been very busy over the past several months. We have been heavily engaged in collecting and updating asset information on guardrails, sidewalks, signal intersections, bike lanes/legends, and bus routes and bus stops. The following numbers will illustrate what the technology section has captured and processed into GIS and INFOR EAM. We have captured over 25 miles of new sidewalk and 114 new curb ramp data. The additional 25 miles will bring the total miles of sidewalk inventory, in the city, to 352 miles. This is keeping in the city theme of “Connecting Neighborhoods to Neighborhoods”. We are proud to be a part of bringing our neighborhoods together. The Signs & Markings section will have an additional 661 new street signs to maintain in their field inventory. The Signal section will have an additional 4 signalized intersections added to their inventory. And last but not least, GTA will have to add 15 new bus stops to its inventory with several new routes to be included.

On the INFOR EAM front, we are about to migrate to a new view of how INFOR EAM, formally known as DATASTREAM, will look. The functionality will remain the same with some new upgrades but the graphics will be the biggest noticeable change. The new INFOR EAM roll out is scheduled for the early part of December 2007. So stay tuned for more updates on the migration of INFOR EAM. Also, we are using a new platform for collecting GDOT assets in the field. The new platform is called ARCPad 7 and ARCPad Extension. Instead of using our old software, Terra Sync, we are now using ARCPad 7. This new platform of data collecting will enable the section to collect field data much faster than before while reducing our time to post process field data from 2 days to just hours. That’s how we roll! This new ESRI software will enable our section to check out GIS layer information, collect that information in the field and data correct that information from the field without coming back to the office. The Technology Section is very excited about the upgrades we’ve added and we look forward to adding new technology to increase our ability of getting your information to you even faster so stay tuned!

# Parking Section

## A New Coat of Greene

That's exactly what happened at the Greene St. Parking Deck. The stairwell and elevator lobbies have received a fresh coat of new green paint. The walls received a lighter coat of green to help brighten and give an open feel to the lobby areas. The doors, door frames, and elevator doors received an accent of sage green. The handrails were also painted a rust color so they would stand out against the painted walls. All of this was part of the enhancements planned for the Greene St. Deck.

The Sign Shop also created some unique new signs to put on the stairwell/elevator lobby doors to identify the parking level for the patrons. The signs are hung on both sides of the doors to aid the parking customers in knowing what level they parked on and making it easier to return to their car on the appropriate parking level.

Another addition to the deck is the newly designed ADA ramps for the Washington St. side of the deck. This side of the parking deck was not originally designed to accommodate the ADA customer parking. On the ground level of the deck, a new ADA ramp has been installed with railing to enable those parking patrons using mobility devices to enter from the sidewalk to the elevator lobby. There are also new ADA ramps that have been installed on levels E & F to accommodate access to the ADA parking spaces located on these levels. Automatic push bar devices have also been installed at these locations to aid in the ease of opening the lobby doors on these parking levels.

## Paintings, Paintings on the Wall

Can you believe that there have been artists at work during all hours of the day and night? That's right! There is an artistic mural that is developing in the stairwell at the Church St. Parking Deck. It is located on the YWCA Place/Church St. side of the parking deck. There have been numerous artists at work over the last couple of months to make this



project come to life. The partnership was formed between the City of Greensboro, Greensboro Library Arts Commission, African-American Atelier, and UNC-Greensboro.

The artist, Brittain Peck, is a UNCG art student. His design features a five-story robot with cartoon characters of young children. They are incorporating fitness and exercise with a senior citizen telling them about significant events of the city's history. The design entices



the parking customers to walk the stairwells in order to view the work of art and to envision the next piece of history revealed by the progression of images in the mural. Come on by and check it out!

## Welcome: Howard Raleigh

Howard Raleigh is the newest member to the Parking Team. He started with the city on October 16, 2007 and is the afternoon and evening part-time attendant at the



Church St. Deck. Howard is a recent retiree from a local utility company and has been a life long resident of Guilford County. His wife, Louise, and he have been married for 24 years. They have 2 sons, Evan and Brandon, who are both attending college. This makes life in-

teresting during football and basketball seasons since they attend different schools. In his spare time, Howard enjoys listening to jazz, watching golf, football, and basketball. Howard states, "I've been embraced by the personnel of the Parking Section and the City of Greensboro and I look forward to many years of future service to the City of Greensboro." Welcome Aboard Howard!



## Signs & Markings Section

The Signs & Markings Section has spent the past several months focusing on developing and implementing strategies that will enable us to take on new challenges while continuing to provide adequate and efficient service levels on routine duties. The Sign Shop has researched and modified the street name sign fabrication and installation process, which has cut the cost of this process by about 30% while improving product quality. Sign crews have successfully completed the installation of signage on all new bike routes in the city. This project could not have been accomplished without the dedication and teamwork of various GDOT sections. Our marking crews have been performing maintenance and installing new markings where needed due to revisions or resurfacing. They continue to modify and enhance equipment allowing for the application of a wider range of marking types on the job site. We have been proactive in determining long range needs for the upcoming annexations and have teamed with budget staff in identifying existing and future resource needs for Traffic Operations. We also took a look at our on-call and emergency response guidelines and made several changes to better respond to the calls and to be more prepared while reducing costs to the city. For those of you that have not had the opportunity to visit the renovated Traffic Operations Center we invite you to visit and/or schedule a meeting in our Safety and Training Room. We would also like to say thanks to **Darrell Williamson** and his staff for their commitment and support with Data Stream and maintaining and building new and existing asset inventories.

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## Signals Section

The traffic signal section is winding down the summer road construction season and preparing to get “Back to Basics” by focusing on some long overdue maintenance activities. We have just completed the last round of LED lamp installations on all of our traffic signals, which was accomplished by doing weekend and after-hours work for several months. I would like to thank the staff of the signal section and several other volunteers who worked many weekends to complete this project. LED lamps use much less power than a traditional light bulb and will ultimately save the City money by reducing power consumption and maintenance costs. Our next maintenance activities will be to replace some older signal heads around town and to replace the 1950’s era “big red” style signal heads in the CBD with new dark green signal heads.

In project news we have completed the installation of a new signal at the Proximity hotel site on Green Valley Road. We have installed a new over height vehicle detector and warning flasher for the Huffine Mill Road bridge on East Wendover. Look for new traffic signals coming in the next few months at Brightwood School Road & Lees Chapel and at Cone & Sixteenth. We are also working with Traffic Engineering to wrap up the design of our new signal system, which will include over 120 miles of new fiber optic cable and the replacement of all our traffic signal control equipment in the field. That project will start in July 2008.

In people news, we would like to welcome two new employees, although both were already City employees. Welcome to **Richard Smith**, from Field Operations, who started as a signal mechanic on August 1st and **David Robertson**, from Building Maintenance, who started as a signal mechanic on November 1st.

Finally, the Traffic Signal Section was dealt a tragic blow when we lost one of our own. On September 10th, **Larry Josh Nelson**, Traffic Signal Mechanic, was killed in a motorcycle accident. Larry was a friendly and hardworking person and a joy to work with. Our thoughts and prayers go out to all his family and friends as we will never forget him.



## Friendly Avenue Project Comes To Completion

Friendly Avenue was completed this month after years of public involvement, planning and design. The project was identified for improvements between North Holden Road and Westridge Road as part of the 2000 package of transportation bonds that were approved by voters. At the time, the volume was approaching 25,000 vehicles per day on a four-lane roadway section without a median or center turn lane. As a result of the high traffic volume and large number of side streets and driveways, the facility was experiencing a higher than average crash rate. Most of these crashes were directly attributable to a lack of turn lanes along the corridor.

The first public meetings for the project were conducted back in 2001 with a good amount of participation from the community. We presented two alternatives: a 5-lane facility with center turn lane or a 4-lane median divided section with selected median openings. The consensus from the meetings was the residents preferred the median option. Speed of traffic along Friendly Avenue was a common complaint that we heard from the public so the recommendation was to install slightly narrower lanes combined with the landscaped median to calm/slow traffic. The final design also reflected sidewalks on both sides to accommodate pedestrian activity along the roadway.



As the project progressed through design, right-of-way acquisition and construction the project was closely watched by many. Despite some criticism regarding lane widths and other obstacles along the way, the project team continued to work with citizens to provide quality customer service and a quality product. Now that the project is complete, it is apparent that the narrower lanes are wide enough to easily accommodate 2 lanes of travel including truck traffic and fire engines. Parks and Recreation is expected to begin landscaping the medians in the spring when we are hopefully in a better situation with the current drought conditions.

The ultimate result is a project that we can all be proud of. We have delivered exactly the product that we told the folks that we would deliver back in 2000 when we held the public meetings, enhancing this critical facility by making it much safer and efficient for motorists, while also enhancing pedestrian activity and bicycling. Many thanks to all those involved in seeing this project through to a successful completion.





## New Design Standards

One of the biggest projects for the last two years in the Engineering Division has been the redesign and ordinance rewrite for the City of Greensboro's Street Design Standards. Our current standards are 40-50 years old and include obsolete design criteria, inflexible rules, and do not serve the needs of the City and its communities adequately. The City's local street design standards received the most amount of changes. Pictured is an example of a cross section for our future local streets. The new local street standards have a maximum design speed of 30 MPH, which is a reasonable maximum speed for residential areas. The previous standard had a maximum design speed of 40 MPH. The new local street standard has also been narrowed from 30 feet wide to 26 feet wide. The narrow cross-section should also lower travel speeds along these local streets.

City Council adopted new street design standards on October 16, 2007. We will begin the process of administering these new standards beginning January 1, 2008. GDOT would like to thank other departments' staff and the community volunteers for their time and

## Late-Night Traffic Signal Operation

Currently most Greensboro signals outside the downtown area operate in a fully vehicle activated (called traffic actuated) mode during late night/early morning hours (generally 10 p.m. until 6 a.m.). These signals are programmed to rest in green on the major street until a vehicle arrives on the minor street. Once the minor street vehicle is served the signal automatically returns to the major street green phase.

While actuated operation is fairly efficient, it can be frustrating for drivers on the major street. A vehicle traveling the major route could be required to make a stop, albeit a brief one, at every signalized intersection. The alternative is to operate thoroughfares in a coordinated mode during these hours. Coordinated operation holds the major street in a fixed green interval regardless of traffic demand. This helps traffic along the major route but creates greater delay for the minor street. A coordination plan for late night/early morning hours would need to operate on the shortest possible cycle length as a short cycle length equals less delay.

An overnight signal coordination plan has been developed for Benjamin Parkway. The shortest possible cycle length was found to be 65 seconds. This was determined by the amount of time required to serve each of the eight signal phases at the Green Valley Road intersection. Left turn phases at some intersections, which are not needed during late night hours, are omitted to increase efficiency.

This coordination plan will be implemented on a trial basis. If it proves successful, similar plans will be developed and implemented along other major routes in the city.





# All Aboard...



## The

# Santa

# Train

Opinions vary widely on just when the annual Christmas season officially begins. For some, the magic starts approximately ten seconds after Thanksgiving desert is served. For others, it's 3 a.m. on Black Friday at the local mall. But for GDOT and the North Carolina Department of Transportation Rail Division, the holiday always begins with the arrival of the Yuletide Express...the Santa Train.

This year, Santa along with several hundred of his closest friends pulled into the J. Douglas Galyon Depot Amtrak Station on Saturday, December 1. Saint Nicholas was also joined by Mrs. Claus and an entourage of carolers, media coordinators and photographers during the annual event sponsored by NCDOT and GDOT. Children and parents joined Santa round trip on one of two trains, traveling from Raleigh to Greensboro or Charlotte to Salisbury for an opportunity to meet the big man up close and enjoy a festive holiday trip, complete with carol singing.

Once arriving in Greensboro, Santa took his place on a holiday-decorated throne and immediately began to receive good little boys and girls and their Christmas wishes. Digital cameras and camera phones joined the traditional photo and video cameras, all capturing the excited expressions of joy, and in some cases, terror for home scrapbooks and possibly, America's Funniest Home Videos television program. While waiting in line, many snacked on hot apple cider and cookies served up by NCDOT volunteer train hosts.

Although Santa Claus was the center of attention, guests during the hour or so layover found other opportunities of entertainment awaiting them. The Carolina Model Railroaders opened up their rail exhibit for attendees to view various-sized model train layouts located on the Depot property. Others who were looking to learn a little about Greensboro without leaving the confines of the station were able to sneak a peek in the new Welcome Center. The recently completed center adjacent to the Depot front entrance features touch-screen displays and most prominently, a floor graphic offering a birds-eye view of downtown Greensboro labeled with major points of interest.

As all good things must come to an end, at the sound of the train arrival announcement, Santa and his guests arose to travel back to the arrival platform for the trip back to the North Pole by way of Raleigh. Even as the group awaited the train's arrival, Santa continued to greet children and offer holiday wishes up to the moment the train arrived. As Santa boarded the passenger car and the train slid out of the station, it left behind plenty of memories of holiday tidings and joy. Finally it was safe to make the announcement. Christmas has begun.





## Greensboro Shares the Road!

On a crisp, overcast morning on October 2, a crowd gathered in the parking lot of Fairway Outdoor Advertising as **Jim Westmoreland** welcomed them to the unveiling of a new billboard and public outreach campaign. He was joined by Mayor Keith Holliday, Hanna Cockburn of the State Bicycle Committee and Greg Kerr, Sports Director of WFMY News 2. When the tarp dropped, they were greeted with an image of happy motorists and bicyclists peacefully coexisting on a roadway with a bike lane and the address of the [www.gsosharestheroad.org](http://www.gsosharestheroad.org) website. All of the models in the picture except one were on hand for the unveiling. The bicyclists all hail from GDOT – **JD Stewart, Anina Aaron and Nick Harrell**. The driver of the car was our own **Lydia McIntyre** and her passenger was Calvin Foster of Engineering & Inspections. The only participant conspicuously absent was Jim Westmoreland's VW convertible! The poster was put up at three other locations in town later that day and later in the month, on four GTA buses. The ads will rotate among billboards in Greensboro through September of 2008.



Ever needed information about bicycling and couldn't quite navigate your way there on the web? Well now it's easy! Just remember that Greensboro Shares the Road and you'll never forget where to go for an-

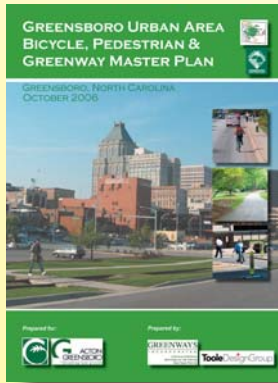
[www.gsosharestheroad.org](http://www.gsosharestheroad.org)



## An Award-Winning MPO

The Greensboro Urban Area MPO (Metropolitan Planning Organization) recently received state and national recognition for excellence in planning and implementation of its projects. These awards recognize the leadership of the Transportation Advisory Committee as well as the GDOT's work as the MPO staff.

The MPO received an Outstanding Planning Award for the Greensboro Urban Area Bicycle, Pedestrian and Greenway Master Plan, also known as the BiPed Plan. The North Carolina chapter of the American Planning Association presented the award on September 28. We share this award with Parks & Recreation, since the plan was a joint effort.



The BiPed Plan was selected as a project of “unusually high merit” in the category of Comprehensive Planning for a Multi-jurisdictional or Regional Project. The Plan integrated planning for non-motorized transportation facilities with planning for off-road greenway trails. The MPO adopted it in October 2006, and the City and County followed suit in December 2006 and June 2007, respectively.

The MPO also received an Honorable Mention award from the national Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations in the category of Outstanding Overall Achievement for a TMA MPO (Transportation Management Area - refers to larger urban areas). The award focuses on the MPO's use of Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funds to support the HEAT bus service, which connects eight college and university campuses in the Greensboro area.

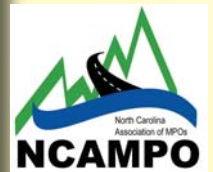
The GDOT staff was instrumental in creating partnerships with the institutions of higher learning the Transportation Advisory Committee determined to direct CMAQ funding to this initiative rather than distributing it among smaller projects. Both of these efforts provided necessary funding support. More information about HEAT is available at its web site, [www.rideheat.com](http://www.rideheat.com) (which you may have heard is also award-winning!)

## An NC MPO Conference to remember

The MPO hosted the 15th annual NC MPO Conference from October 24th – 26th at the Downtown Marriott. The conference brought together 312 transportation planners, engineers, and other officials to learn, share experiences, and build professional relationships. This year's conference theme, “At the Crossroads” was appropriate in that transportation policy nationally appears to be at a crossroads as well as that Greensboro is a crossroads of transportation and commerce in the Piedmont.

The conference featured three mobile tours, twelve technical sessions, and lunch with keynote speaker Mona Edwards of the Center for Creative Leadership. Despite three solid days of much needed rain, attendees were able to experience Greensboro and generally left with a positive impression of the community. Sample comments included “this was the best (MPO) conference ever”, “the conference should be in Greensboro every year”, “what an excellent technical program”, and “you guys really are organized!”

Thank you to GDOT staff in Planning, Administration, and the Sign Shop for making an NC MPO Conference to remember!





## Moving the Long Range Transportation Plan horizon to 2035

The MPO is in the process of updating the 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan to the 2035 time horizon. The 2004 planning effort involved extensive analysis and over 14 public meetings in MPO area communities to produce a major overhaul of the previous plan. The 2007-2008 effort is building off of this work to reflect current information as well as additional analysis and public involvement.

The LRTP is federally mandated for such updates every four years. The LRTP is both a short and long-term planning document detailing multi-modal transportation improvements and policies for the Greensboro Urban Area. The primary elements evaluated in the LRTP include Highway, Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Freight, a potential time line for future investments, and air quality and other environmental impacts. The LRTP provides an opportunity for area decision makers to consider key funding challenges the area may face in the years ahead and potential strategies for addressing them. Public meetings are expected to be scheduled early next year. The final document is expected to be complete next July with approval by the Transportation Advisory Committee in August 2008.

### Here's Another TIP

In the last issue of Traffic Zone, you read about the completed Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP) for 2007-2013. That document lists all the transportation projects that have state and federal funding and are scheduled for action. The state incorporates the MTIP into the State TIP, which is approved at the federal level, and then money can actually flow to projects.

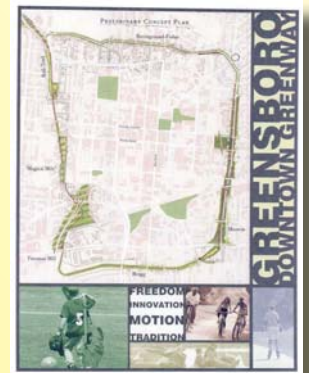
The MPO and NCDOT are now beginning work on the next version of this document, the 2009-2015 MTIP. A shift in the development cycle has caused the need to work on this document now, only a few months after wrapping up the last one. NCDOT has completed a draft of its statewide Program that should reflect projects submitted by the MPO. This will provide the basis for the MTIP, with modifications where needed and feasible. After public revisions and further revisions, the MPO will look to complete the program of funded projects by summer 2008.

An initial look at the state's program indicates delays to three area highway projects from what is shown in the 2007-2013 document. Construction of the West Market Street widening project has slipped from 2010 to 2011, the Eastern Urban Loop from 2011 to 2013, and the Greensboro section of High Point Road widening from 2011 to 2012. Some revisions will be needed to the transit section of the state document in order for it to be consistent with the municipal program.

The current MTIP is always posted at [www.guampo.org](http://www.guampo.org) (scroll to the bottom of the page). Also, please see the current Project Update Newsletter on the website for an easy-to-read version of major NCDOT and City transportation project status information.

### Greensboro's Downtown Greenway

GDOT Planning and Engineering staff has worked extensively with stakeholders to refine routing concepts for the proposed Downtown Greenway, a multi-use trail to encircle downtown Greensboro. GDOT analysis began with a look at the initial concepts brought forth by the project's proponents. Staff review with assistance from Martin/Alexiou/Bryson led to identification of key constraints and potential alternative routes. Through an iterative process of refinement, we explored a range of factors and performed a sort of "reality check" on the conceptual route for the project.



We have presented stakeholders with a range of options, including pros and cons of each, so that they can make informed choices and seek buy-in from the community. The greenway is envisioned to be both a high-quality element of Greensboro's multimodal transportation system as well as a catalyst for economic and community development in and around downtown.

# Public Transportation

## ARE WE DONE YET?

Almost!

Greensboro Transit Authority's current ticket and waiting area at the Depot is always a hub of activity as riders wait for their buses or conduct transactions at the customer service window. At times, the room can get very crowded as GTA ridership continues to grow. Fortunately, GTA and GDOT foresaw the needs and integrated into Phase III of the Depot renovation project. A new waiting room has been recently completed and opened to public use. The room, at 3,500 square feet, will offer many of the same amenities as the current waiting area. Period-style benches line the room while exterior doors offer access to the outside courtyard as well as the bus slip areas. Vending machines are also available

in the fresh space. The waiting area will be used primarily as a GTA overflow area, but it will also house a waiting area for PART Express riders.

Although the room is essentially ready for use, some final touches will be applied. Schedule racks will be installed as well as foliage along the windows. As in the current waiting area, a television will be installed to provide news and information. An electronic display board is also scheduled for installation which will offer timely bus information for passengers. GTA thanks everyone for their patience as the space has been under construction, and we look forward to its continued use and enjoyment.





## GTA Celebrates Rosa Parks Day

On Thursday, December 1, 1955, a little-known seamstress from Montgomery, Alabama would go into the history books for sitting down. Or rather, not standing. Rosa L. Parks was arrested on that day for violating the Montgomery City code requiring the separation of races. She refused to relinquish her seat on a city bus as requested by the driver. That action on public transportation is widely held to have launched the modern day civil rights movement, leading to other demonstrations and protests such as the Greensboro Sit-Ins.

On this date every year, Greensboro Transit Authority recognizes the importance of Rosa Parks' actions by observing Rosa Parks Day on December 1st. This year, all GTA and HEAT buses reserved a single seat with a gold ribbon in honor of her deeds. Libby James, Public Transportation Manager for the City of Greensboro feels strongly about observing the day dedicated to the elimination of segregated public transportation.

"It was very appropriate on that Thursday evening in 1955, public transportation became a focal point of the battle for civil rights," said Libby James, Public Transportation Manager. "Municipal transit systems were heavily utilized in the 1950's by citizens of all races. In many places unfortunately, their operations mirrored community attitudes and even municipal laws with a virtual dividing line in the bus aisle separating the races. But Mrs. Parks' standing up...or rather, sitting down, focused the attention of the nation on equal rights for all Americans.

While Mrs. Parks' passing in 2005 left a hole in the hearts of many, her legacy will continue to shine as it has not only benefited African-Americans, but people of all races.



**Bus fare for ride home from  
work: 10 cents**

**Bail for violating  
Chapter 6, Section 11 of the  
Montgomery City Code supporting  
separation of races: 50 dollars**

**Paying the price  
so future generations can travel  
where and when they desire:  
Awesome!**

**December 1 is Rosa Parks Day**

GTA – The New Era.



## HEAT *Rock*s the Bells

It's all about giving back. In its second year of operation, Higher Education Area Transit has provided tens of thousands of trips throughout Greensboro and Jamestown for college students as well as the general public. What better way for the students to give back to the community that is providing such a valuable service than by serving the community with a local non-profit. HEAT "Rocked The Bells" on Friday, November 30 for the Salvation Army of Greensboro. The college-based transit system sponsored a day of bell ringing at one of the familiar red kettles located at the Great Outdoor Provision Company in Friendly Center. Throughout the day, volunteers sang Christmas carols and spread holiday cheer while ringing the brass bell, encouraging shoppers to support the worthwhile cause. Kenneth Crawford, a student of Guilford Technical Community College was among those who helped show the Greensboro community that is not just about what you can get, but also what you can give. Joining the students were staff members of GTA and Veolia Transportation who contributed lunch and other personal hours for a great cause. In the end, all of the funds collected from the kettle will be used to fund the Salvation Army's many services and programs. A special thank-you to all of the participants who came out to Rock the Bells for the community good!



### PARTICIPANTS

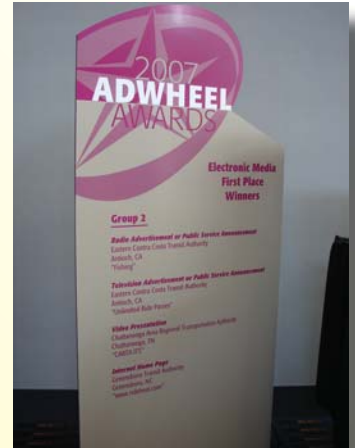
Sherria Allen	Libby James
Sabrina Bancroft	Stacy Labean
Darin Black	George Linney
Sam Bethea	Tenisha Marshall
Kenneth Crawford	Nancy Nichols
Jessica Elwood	Rick McCollum
Kevin Elwood	Dionne Pittman
Lauren Elwood	Sharon Smiley





# WWW – World Wide...Wow!

When the HEAT partner school communications representatives, GTA transit planners and marketers put their heads together to design a website for the new HEAT service, the goals were to make the website attractive to HEAT's target audience (college students), able to effectively communicate transit information and easy to maintain. The resulting site, designed by The King's English successfully met all three criteria, generating over 1.5 million hits in the first school year and becoming the riders' one-stop source for all things HEAT. The site, however, has one other source of pride. Rideheat.com was awarded First Place in the American Public Transportation Association AdWheel Award Competition for Excellence in Marketing through Electronic Media. Compared with nominees of similar transit system size around the country, rideheat.com was recognized for its innovative, yet effective design for reaching riders with important transit information. HEAT and its partner marketing agency Clear View Strategies was recognized at the Association's annual meeting held in Charlotte. As the service continues to grow, the website will continue to serve current and potential riders with the information they need to effectively use public transportation.



## New GTA Service Animal Policy

*On October 23, 2007 the Greensboro Transit Authority Board approved a new policy regarding the use of service animals on GTA, HEAT and SCAT transit vehicles. This policy was developed in order to outline the access and the responsibilities of service animals and their owners. For questions about this or any other GTA policy, please contact us at 373-2634.*

The Greensboro Transit Authority (GTA) does not discriminate against individuals with disabilities. GTA is committed to employing reasonable measures to ensure that all residents of Greensboro may enjoy public transportation. In furtherance of this commitment, GTA desires to promulgate the following policy regulating the use of service animals on fixed-route buses, paratransit vehicles and all other transportation facilities.

A service animal means any guide dog, signal dog, or other animal individually trained to work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability, including, but not limited to, guiding individuals with impaired vision, alerting individuals with impaired hearing to intruders or sounds, providing minimal protection or rescue work, pulling a wheelchair, or fetching dropped items. If any animal meets this definition then it is considered a service animal irrespective of whether the animal has been licensed or certified by a state or local government.

Pets are prohibited on all GTA fixed-route buses, paratransit vehicles and transportation facilities. When a pa-

tron accompanied by an animal attempts to access a GTA fixed-route bus, paratransit vehicle or transportation facility a GTA operator or employee may ask the patron if the animal is a service animal required because of a disability. If the patron indicates that the animal is a service animal required because of a disability then the GTA operator must permit the animal to access the fixed-route bus, paratransit vehicle or transportation facility. If the patron indicates that the animal is not a service animal required because of a disability then the GTA operator or employee must prohibit the animal from entering upon any fixed-route bus, paratransit vehicle or transportation facility. A GTA operator or employee may not insist that a patron provides proof that their animal is a service animal.

A disabled patron employing a service animal must clean and dispose of all animal waste, must provide food and care for the animal as needed, make sure that the animal is in good health and ensure that the animal is controlled by a leash or bridle at all times. A GTA operator or employee may exclude or remove any service animal if the service animal displays disruptive, vicious or aggressive behavior or constitutes a direct threat to the health or safety of others. In the alternative, a GTA operator may require any disabled patron who does not comply with this policy to disembark the fixed-route bus, paratransit vehicle or transportation facility, and GTA shall transport the patron and their service animal to their destination separately.

# OFF to the parade!

There's just something about a parade that brings out the kid in everyone. Coming together to celebrate a holiday or special occasion...it's the perfect environment from a marketing view to promote a product, such as public transit. GTA and HEAT readily accepted the opportunities to get in front of current and potential riders by participating in several parades this year.

Fun Fourth launched the first parade tour where GTA brought out both the latest GTA and HEAT buses. GTA's vehicle sported the patriotic red, white and blue décor while HEAT...well, we couldn't add any more colors to it, now could we? Nevertheless, parade goers enjoyed seeing the latest offerings in public transportation and we hoped that the experience would plant a seed in the minds of children and parents to give public transportation a try.

October brought one of the biggest annual events in Greensboro, the Homecoming of North Carolina A&T State University. Its homecoming parade, a long-running tradition, is more than just a campus event...it's a true community event. In celebration of A&T joining the HEAT service this year, the multi-colored bus rolled along the parade route for the enjoyment of students, children and other attendees. To offer the unexpected to the parade attendees, the bus was outfitted with an external PA speaker connected to the onboard CD player. Attendees who were not already astonished by the visual presence of the vehicle were amazed to hear such a vehicle blasting Lakeside's "Fantastic Voyage," an appropriate nod to a HEAT transit experience. As overheard by one attendee, "A bus playing music...now that's something I've never seen...cool!"

The final parade was the Jaycees Annual Holiday Parade, televised the following day on WFMY News 2 Television. HEAT took its place once again, this time in the spirit of the holiday season, offering parade-goers the sounds of the Jackson 5's "Santa Claus is Coming to Town." Of course, Santa was already in town, at the end of the parade procession where he waved and smiled for the good little boys and girls. Santa may have been the star attraction, but HEAT was able to get quite a bit of attention from the kids with a GTA operator who dressed as a clown and handed out candy all along the parade route.

If you want to see HEAT and the other entries in the Holiday Parade, WFMY will re-air the parade on Christmas Day when you can once again see all the joy of the holiday season. Like they say, everyone loves a parade...





*Students are all smiles after visiting the HEAT booth at Get Down!Town 2007.*



Smile...it's the  
**GDOT**  
*Snapshot*



*Public Transportation Manager Libby James welcomes students from North Carolina A&T's Summer Transportation Institute.*



*Signs & Markings' Chris Dalton prepares to install school warning signage at the new Guilford Elementary School.*



*Participants in the Greensboro Shares The Road campaign photo shoot take a break for the camera. From l-r Nick Harrell, JD Stewart, Calvin Foster, Jim Westmoreland, Anina Aaron and Lydia McIntyre.*



*Students and teachers from Greensboro YWCA take a break during a tour of the J. Douglas Galyon Depot.*



*Planning's Peter Ohlms along with his wife Amanda volunteer for Get Down!Town 2007.*



*Not everyone was anxious to meet Santa Claus at the Depot during the Santa Train visit.*



*Kevin Elwood, Jim Westmoreland and Libby James join fellow public transportation professionals for lunch at the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) Annual Meeting in Charlotte.*

